

FY 2011 State Plan Required Attachments

Cooperation with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities under the Statewide Workforce Investment System {Attachment 4.8(b) (1)}

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system with respect to:

- Federal, state, and local agencies and programs;
- if applicable, Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture; and
- if applicable, state use contracting programs.

The Department of Human Services Division of State Services for the Blind (DSB) has cooperative agreements with the following agencies not carrying out activities under the statewide Workforce Investment system:

- Arkansas Educational Television Network
- Arkansas School for the Blind
- 33 Institutions of Higher Education
- Arkansas Department of Education, Special Education
- Educational Services for the Visually Impaired
- DHS Division of Aging and Adult Services
- DHS Division of Behavioral Health
- DHS Division of Children and Family Services
- DHS Division of County Operations
- DHS Division of Developmental Disabilities Services
- DHS Division of Volunteerism
- DHS Division of Youth Services

Coordination with DHS

Co-location - DSB serves all 75 counties in Arkansas, and VR counselors have base offices in DHS offices in 10 geographic locations around the state. Referrals may be made directly to the appropriate DSB field office serving the individual's community or through the DSB Central Office.

Strategic Energy Plan – DSB participates in the new DHS Strategic Energy Plan task force (StEP), which has been recognized by the Governor’s Office as the “gold standard” for state agencies. Act 1494 of 2009 directs state agencies to reduce energy use by 20 percent between now and 2014, and by 30 percent by 2017. An Executive Order also requires agencies to develop individual Strategic Energy Plans.

The DHS energy plan addresses recycling, lighting, training employees, communications, vehicles, paper reduction, plug loads of appliances/computers, weatherization, and other green initiatives. The plan recognizes that to accomplish energy savings, educating employees about energy conservation and a culture change within the department will be needed. The future annual reduction of DHS energy use by 20 percent would save DHS more than \$1,500,000 in direct annual operating costs and would reduce carbon emissions by 150,000 tons per year.

Leadership - DSB coordinates with other DHS Divisions by, including but not limited to, participating in “Leadership in a High Performance Culture” workshops for managers and supervisors and serving on the DHS Office of Policy and Planning Work Group.

Access - The DSB Field Services Administrator attends Access Arkansas meetings, which involve coordination among all DHS agencies. The purpose is to develop a simplified, generic application that can be used as a starting point to apply for all DHS services. DSB is among the pilot agencies to be included in the initial release. Individuals who are blind or severely impaired can now access the application from their home or some other location through the DHS website 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Additional DHS agencies and programs continue to be added and enhancements made.

Coordination with United States Department of Agriculture

DSB refers consumers to commodity programs and the Food Stamp program, which are under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Faith-based Transportation Effort

DSB continues its faith-based effort with Laity Involved in Free Transportation (LIFT), a volunteer program through the First United Methodist Church. DSB distributes information and refers consumers to LIFT, which provides free transportation services to individuals in Little Rock and North Little Rock who have no other means of transportation to doctor appointments and medical treatments.

Emergency Preparedness Collaborations

Prompted by the past events of Hurricane Katrina and 911, DSB currently participates in two groups: the Emergency Preparedness Work Group and the Business Continuity Plans

Task Force. The groups are charged with developing strategic plans for emergency preparedness; response and recovery; and maintenance of services in the aftermath of a disaster. For the Emergency Preparedness Work Group, DSB participates on the DHS team responsible for planning and implementation of the portion of the State Emergency Operations Plan involving the functions of mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services. This necessitates DSB collaborating with other DHS divisions, state agencies, local governments, and non-governmental organizations. DSB also collaborates with the Business Continuity Plans Task Force to complete a plan for continued operations in the event of a disaster. This plan utilizes Living Disaster Recovery System software and involves other agencies. Once the plan was completed, table top exercises were conducted to determine any gaps in planning. The plan is updated as needed, and periodic drills will ensure that plans remain current and employees are informed on what to do in the event of an emergency.

DSB is coordinating with fire departments in eight northwest Arkansas counties to get smoke detectors installed in consumers' homes. The project started in Boone County with a grant to fire departments there and is expected to extend as other grants are approved.

DSB is collaborating with North Arkansas College to find a source for providing weather alert radios to consumers. This is a rural state that experiences a high number of tornadoes and other weather events. Access to information in such situations can be critical to consumers who are blind or visually impaired. The project is expected to require an extended timeframe and be ongoing as new consumers are added to the list of individuals needing this service.

Coordination with Blind Agencies/Organizations

DSB collaborates with the following organizations, agencies, and non-profits through their participation on the DSB board and in the day-to-day provision of services to consumers: the Arkansas Lions; Arkansas Affiliate National Federation of the Blind (NFB); Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER); Lions World Services for the Blind (LWSB); Arkansas Association of Blind Business Enterprise Managers; the Blinded Veterans Association; Arkansas School for the Blind (ASB); and the Arkansas Chapter American Council of the Blind (ACB). The Disability Rights Center (DRC) and the Arkansas Independent Living Council (AIRC) are scheduled for presentations at each board meeting. Time is also scheduled for consumer input during DSB board meetings.

The DSB Director or designee attends AIRC board meetings. DSB staff and DSB Board members attend ACB, NFB, LWSB, and AER local, state and/or national activities/events. DSB representatives are sometimes asked to be presenters at these organizations' annual state conferences, and representatives from these organizations are sometimes invited to be presenters at DSB meetings and conferences. Some DSB staff are members of these organizations. VR Counselors participate in staffings regarding their consumers at LWSB. DSB continues to work closely with consumer groups.

Support Groups

Rehabilitation Teachers meet monthly with the Low Vision Support Group of Paragould, the Ozark Support Group in the town of Ozark, and the Garland County Support Group. A faith-based initiative has started to form a support group in Harrison through the efforts of a former consumer, St. John's Episcopal Church, and the DSB Job Coach there. The Job Coach also attends the Visually Impaired Persons (VIP) Support Group meetings in Mountain Home.

CILs and Other Providers

DSB pays LWSB and the Louisiana Center for the Blind on a "fee for services" case-by-case basis. At the recommendation of RSA, DSB implemented a system of performance-based contracts with Centers for Independent Living in the state. When this system took effect July 1, 2008, Sources Inc. was the only CIL that participated during the first year. In FY 2010, two CILs, Sources Inc. and Mainstream, entered into contracts with DSB. It is expected in the FY 2011 round of contracts that additional CILs will participate.

Through the contract with Sources Inc., the VR Counselor in Fayetteville can be called in to assist with its Job Club if an individual who is blind or severely visually impaired shows up seeking services.

Coordination with Education-related Partners

DSB collaborates with 22 member agencies participating in the Arkansas Interagency Transition Partnership (AITP), which meets at the state level on a quarterly basis to coordinate transition services and discuss related issues. The next Transition Summit will be in October, 2010, and is expected to focus on local transition teams. DSB is exploring the possibility of establishing a team that focuses on students who are blind or severely visually impaired and brings together DSB staff, the Educational Vision Consultants from ESVI, and other stakeholders.

Counselors are still not being notified in advance for IEP meetings as they should be, but Area Field Supervisors stated communication with schools has greatly improved since an initiative was started in FY 2009 to increase outreach, coordination and cooperation to public schools. Each DSB regional office maintains a contact list for all secondary schools in its service area and regularly sends letters and information to contacts on the list. In FY 2011, an e-mail component will be added as a supplemental method of contact. Rehabilitation Assistants will obtain the email addresses for school contacts, and VR Counselors and their assistants will serve as agency contacts. This process gives schools a pathway for increased communications with DSB.

Relationships with ESVI have been strengthened by outreach and coordination initiatives put in place during FY 2010. As part of these initiatives, Rehabilitation Assistant II's are mailing information to ESVI at least twice a year, in the fall and winter months. In FY 2011, an e-mail component will be added as a supplemental method of contact.

Rehabilitation Assistants will obtain the email addresses for ESVI contacts, and VR Counselors and their assistants will serve as agency contacts. Coordination has increased with the appointment of a DSB Board member who is employed by ESVI, even though the staff member is actually representing AER on the board.

Crime Victims

DSB is represented on the Crime Victims with Disabilities Council, a subset of Partners for Inclusive Communities-University of Arkansas Medical Sciences.

Additional Information: Cooperation with Agencies within the Statewide Workforce Investment System

DSB has cooperative agreements with local Workforce Investment Boards, which are periodically reviewed and updated as necessary. DSB also has cooperative agreements with the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (a general agreement and a deafblind agreement).

DSB, ARS, the DHS Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS), the DHS Division of Behavioral Health Services (BHS), and the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), Special Education Unit (SEU), Transition Unit are partners in a cooperative agreement outlining responsibilities and the provision of services, including Supported Employment, to transition-aged consumers.

The DSB Director serves on the Governor's Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, which meets quarterly, and VR Counselors are members of the local Workforce Investment Boards, which meet quarterly across the state.

DSB has collaborated with the DWS to place accessible kiosks in ten DWS centers to better serve people who are blind or visually impaired. DHS used part of its departmental American Recovery and Reinvestment (ARRA) funds to purchase the computers, software and other equipment necessary for the accessible kiosks, and DSB job developers and job coaches hired with ARRA funds meet consumers at these DWS sites to assist them in their job searches.

In July 2010, DSB plans to join Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities in hosting the Youth Leadership Forum, a transition conference on the campus of the University of Central Arkansas in Conway. The five-day event teaches high school students with disabilities leadership skills, disability rights, advocacy, résumé writing, job interviewing skills, and the latest in assistive technology. Students will also tour the Arkansas State Capitol and meet top state officials before participating in a Mentors' Luncheon.

Coordination with Education Officials

{Attachment 4.8(b) (2)}

- Describe the designated state unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including provisions for the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment before each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting or, if the designated state unit is operating on an order of selection, before each eligible student able to be served under the order leaves the school setting.
- Provide information on the formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency with respect to
 - consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;
 - transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs;
 - roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;
 - procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

DSB maintains a cooperative agreement with the Arkansas Department of Education, Special Education, regarding transition services to students who are blind or severely visually impaired and are in public schools, including Arkansas School for the Blind (ASB). The interagency agreement with the Department of Education outlines the roles and responsibilities, financial responsibility, determination of lead agency, and qualified personnel.

DSB also has cooperative agreements with:

- Arkansas School for the Blind
- Arkansas School for the Deaf
- Educational Services for the Visually Impaired (ESVI)
- 33 Institutions of Higher Education

DSB counselors assist in developing and approving Individual Plans for Employment (IPE's) before each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting. Directive 08-06 was sent August 5, 2008 to field staff to remind them of the importance of developing IPE's for students transitioning from high school to secondary education or employment and to complete the IPE before the student's graduation.

DSB is a charter member of the Arkansas Interagency Transition Partnership (AITP), which has approximately 22 member agencies and is coordinated by Arkansas Transition Services in affiliation with the Arkansas Department of Education, Special Education Unit. AITP meets quarterly to discuss transition issues and coordinate services among the member agencies. The next Transition Summit will be in October, 2010, and is expected to focus on local transition teams. DSB is exploring the possibility of establishing a team that focuses on students who are blind or severely visually impaired and brings together DSB staff, the Educational Vision Consultants from ESVI, and other stakeholders.

Secondary schools invite DSB to Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings to be part of the planning team to assist education agencies in preparing students who are blind or severely visually impaired for transition from school to post-school activities, such as employment, training, supported employment, and other VR services. The IEP outlines the roles and responsibilities of DSB, the student, the school, and any other agency/organization involved in providing transition services.

In regard to the development and approval of Individual Plans for Employment (IPE), all DSB consumers, including transition students, receive services based upon their IPE. The counselor and the consumer and/or a representative, as appropriate, develop the IPE jointly and mutually approve its contents. The IPE must be designed to achieve the specific employment outcome chosen by the individual and be consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and informed choice. The services, service providers, and all activities selected by the consumer must be necessary to meet the employment outcome goal. The VR Counselor communicates with the consumer and other service providers, such as ARS, to avoid duplication of services and to ensure that comparable benefits are considered.

DSB participates in the Transition Learning Collaborative (TLC), a group established by the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Center to share information and resources to improve transition at the state level. TACE Center staff researches student data collection and analyzes models used in other states and shares them with the states in the TLC collaborative. In November 2010, DSB plans to meet with TACE and representatives from four other states to discuss the evaluations from the last online training module developed for VR Counselors and mid-level management, titled "All

Aboard the Transition Train”. This information will be used to improve the next training offered. In addition to its annual meeting, the TLC has monthly teleconferences.

DSB is collaborating with North Arkansas College to find a source for providing weather alert radios to consumers living in that area. This effort is expected to be ongoing over an extended time.

Responsibilities

DSB is both a DSU and a DSA. DSB is also a division within the Department of Human Services. DSB has an RSA-approved agreement with the Department of Education/Special Education, which provides information on financial responsibilities, the lead agency, and qualified personnel.

Outreach Procedures

Field Services Directive 08-06 was developed for contacting schools and distributing information at least semi-annually. Per the directive, each DSB regional office maintains a contact list for all secondary schools in its service area and sends letters and information to contacts on the list. This process gives schools a pathway for increased communications with DSB.

Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations {Attachment 4.8(b)(3)}

Describe the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers.

DSB develops agreements in response to: (1) state and federal laws and regulations, (2) results of needs assessments, (3) suggestions from consumer groups, and (4) recommendations of staff and stakeholders including those in the Workforce Services arena. DSB uses the RSA guideline template to develop cooperative agreements.

DSB has been a long-standing partner with the Deaf/Blind Consortium, which has changed its name to the Arkansas Deafblindness Project. DSB refers consumers to the Deafblindness Project. DSB serves on the Arkansas Advisory Committee for the Deafblindness Project, which provides training for parents and professionals to foster stronger partnerships among agencies who work with this population. The Deafblindness Project maintains a deafblind registry and requests related information from DSB. The Deafblindness Project and The Deafblind Project’s grant has been extended to run through September 2013. DSB is an affiliate of the Helen Keller National Center.

DSB has a system of performance-based contracts with the Centers for Independent Living in the state. Two CIL's, Sources for Community Independent Living Services Inc. (Sources Inc.) and Mainstream, participated during FY 2010. DSB expects to issue a new Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in late July 2010.

DSB operates the Arkansas Information Reading Services (AIRS), which began as a private non-profit organization and is now part of the state agency. The organization's founders formed Friends of AIRS (FAIRS) to continue its support of the station. DSB leases facilities for AIRS from the Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN), which provides DSB with in-kind services in the form of engineering services and other technology.

Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services {Attachment 4.8(b) (4)}

Describe the efforts of the designated state agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide the following services to individuals with the most significant disabilities:

- supported employment services; and
- extended services.

DSB, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS), the DHS Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS), the DHS Division of Behavioral Health Services (BHS), and the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), Special Education Unit (SEU), Transition Unit are partners in a cooperative agreement outlining responsibilities and the provision of services, including Supported Employment, to transition-aged consumers. The agreement produced an interagency steering committee which works on Supported Employment issues. The steering committee is facilitated by the EmployAbility Project, which is a grant program housed in the DHS Division of Aging and Adult Services.

DSB collaborates with ARS and other agencies to interest Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) in assisting with Supported Employment services such as job assessment, job adjustment, On-the-job Training (OJT), placement, and transition services. In FY 2011, DSB will investigate the potential success of getting CRPs to become Employment Networks (ENs).

DSB coordinates with over 20 agencies, non-profits and consumers on the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) Advisory Committee. The MIG Project has had its grant renewed with funding running through 2011. The MIG Project works to:

- reduce barriers to Supported Employment;
- recruit more SE providers;
- reduce barriers to employment in other systems, such as workforce, special education, etc.;
- improve cooperation and collaboration among agencies and organizations;
- improve community outreach about the Medicaid Buy-In and other work incentives;
- publicize positive stories about individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired and/or have other disabilities, but who are also successfully employed;
- encourage changes in the Medicaid system to support employment, such as making Medicaid user-friendly to individuals who work; and
- offer training to VR Counselors regarding accessing these Medicaid programs and advocating with DHS county Medicaid workers to assist consumer's through the application process.
- increase participation in the Ticket To Work program, by recruiting and training providers (employment networks).

DSB anticipates the EmployAbility Project training DSB staff at its annual statewide conference on changes in programs related to benefits and work.

DSB uses a performance-based reimbursement system for services provided by Community Rehabilitation Programs located around the state.

Extended Services

As with the rest of the nation, DSB is struggling to secure CRPs willing to provide extended services. DSB will continue working with the Interagency Steering Committee and CRPs to develop a network of CRPs committed to the provision of ongoing support. In FY 2011, DSB will investigate the potential success of getting CRPs to become Employment Networks (ENs).

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development {Attachment 4.10}

The Arkansas Division of State Services for the Blind (DSB) supports a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) as required by Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992. DSB's CSPD Plan is aimed at securing and maintaining an adequate supply of qualified rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals to provide Rehabilitation services to blind and severely visually

impaired individuals. DSB requires VR Counselors to be certified by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) or at minimum be qualified to be certified and working toward certification. DSB requires Rehabilitation Teachers to be certified by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) or at minimum be qualified to be certified and working toward certification. These state standards are consistent with national standards requiring recognized certifications for personnel providing vocational Rehabilitation services.

Procedures for evaluating progress

The Field Services Administrator and area Field Supervisors monitor progress by staff to meet CSPD standards. The Field Services Administrator reports on CSPD progress to the Assistant Director. Previously, the Training Coordinator was heavily involved in this process, but this staff member has retired and the position has not yet been filled. An employee that declares retirement receives a lower priority in attaining the CSPD standard, but is required to complete a course which will increase expertise but not satisfy the federal requirement. Newly hired counselors have established timeframes (seven years from date of hire) to meet the requirements or face reclassification and demotion or other measures. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors receive priority in training for CSPD requirements, and Rehabilitation Teachers for the Blind are given second priority.

Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development Qualified Personnel Needs {Attachment 4.10(a) (1)}

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

- the number of personnel who are employed by the state agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;
- the number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and
- projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the state agency to

provide vocational rehabilitation services in the state in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

DHS Division of Services for the Blind is dedicated to ensuring an adequate supply of qualified professionals and support staff. DSB has a strong commitment to providing and making available training programs especially for staff that provide direct services to consumers.

Current Staffing Levels

DHS Division of Services for the Blind has sufficient staff on hand to staff the VR Program. DSB works aggressively to fill vacancies promptly. DSB has 13 authorized VR Counselors, with one vacant position. Field Services has 14 support staff. In Counseling and Guidance, there are three CRC Counselors and one CRC eligible. One counselor has an LSW.

In addition, there are 10 ARRA positions for Job Development. These include five Job Developers and five Job Coaches. DSB has 14 extra help positions, one is filled currently.

Caseload Data

The 13 VR caseloads had an average caseload of 66 individuals as of October 1, 2009, with a statewide total of 791 active cases and a total of 1405 served during the preceding 12 months. The nine Rehabilitation Teaching caseloads had an average of 52 individuals and a statewide total of 413 active cases and a total of 700 served during the preceding 12 months. This is consistent with historical patterns and represents a manageable number of cases given the number of staff on hand.

Projected Number of Replacement Staff in the Next Five Years

DSB anticipates an elevated level of retirement among its experienced staff in the next five years. It is expected that there will be a fairly regular replacement rate for staff during the next five years.

The number of staff on hand as of June 1, 2010 and projected annual number of replacements by category are as follows:

Category	Total Positions	Current Vacancies	Projected Vacancies over the next 5 years
Administrative Staff	14	2	2
Counselor Staff	37	2	6
Staff Supporting Counselor Activities	8	0	3
Other Staff	2	0	0

Personnel Development {Attachment 4.10(a) (2)}

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

- a list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by type of program;
- the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
- the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

The Training Coordinator is responsible for collecting and maintaining this data. Field Supervisors maintain contact with the institutions of higher education in their respective areas and gather data. The Field Services Administrator monitors the process and reports the annual data to the Assistant Director. The following institutions of higher education have programs preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals; the data is for summer 2009 through spring 2010:

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) has two Masters programs for preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, a Masters in Rehabilitation Teaching

(MRT) and a Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling Education (RCE) with Emphasis in Rehabilitation Counseling. The MRT also offers an Emphasis in Orientation and Mobility (O&M). Both programs are housed in the Counseling, Adult and Rehabilitation Education (CARE) degree Masters of Arts. Currently, two DSB staff, including one person with a disability, are enrolled in these programs. The MRT program will dissolve after current students complete their curriculum, but the O&M program will continue.

The MRT program at UALR has 35 students, all of them part-time. Of these students, there are 15 with disabilities, 8 males, and 27 females. Of the 35 students enrolled, the ethnicity is only known for 17; of these, one is African-American and 16 are Caucasian. Of the five program completers by spring, 2010, two have disabilities, one is male, and four are female. Employment: three with state vocational rehabilitation agencies and 2 with private agencies serving individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

The RCE program at UALR has 238 students; of these students, there are 167 part-time, 71 full-time, 78 with disabilities, 40 males, 198 females, and 122 self-identified as non-Caucasian. Of the 38 program completers by spring 2010, there are 14 with disabilities, six males, 32 females, and 16 self-identified as non-Caucasian. Employment: 19 with state vocational rehabilitation agencies, 12 with not-for-profit facilities or community-based programs, and one in a university setting.

The University of North Texas (UNT) was awarded a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) grant April, 2009 and will fund 18 VR Counselors outside of Texas. DSB will pursue this online training opportunity for new VR Counselors to complete their Master's degree. Currently there are two DSB employees enrolled at UNT.

The University of Arkansas at Fayetteville (U of A) offers a Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling through the Rehabilitation Education and Research Program housed in the Department of Rehabilitation, Human Resources, Communication Disorders. Of the 32 students enrolled, there are 13 males, 19 females, one international student (Malaysian), two Latinos, two Native Americans, seven African-Americans, and 16 individuals with disabilities. Of the 14 students who graduated this past year, 13 received both their Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) and Licensed Accredited Counselor (LAC). After graduation, 11 students were employed in private rehabilitation and three in state rehabilitation services, including two employed by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS).

Arkansas State University (ASU) at Jonesboro offers a Masters Rehabilitation Counseling program, which is housed in the Psychology and Counseling Department. Of the 27 students enrolled, there are 10 full-time, eight part-time, eight minorities (one with a disability). Of the seven graduates, one is a minority, none have a disability, and all are U.S. citizens. Graduate employment: one in state rehabilitation services, five in not-for-profit facilities or community-based programs, five in rehabilitation-related settings (not VR funded), one in a university setting, and six employed in non-rehabilitation settings.

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) and Arkansas Tech University (ATU) at Russellville do not offer Master's degree programs in Rehabilitation Services, but do offer Bachelor degree programs in Rehabilitation Science.

The Rehabilitation Services curriculum at UAPB offers a comprehensive program designed to prepare students for employment in a wide range of rehabilitation-related positions. Students who graduate from the program usually minor in criminal justice or social work. Other students become rehabilitation generalists or enter a Master's program in rehabilitation counseling or other related programs, such as occupational or physical therapy. Of the 13 students enrolled in spring 2010, there were 10 full-time students, three part-time students, and 13 minority (African-American) students.

The Rehabilitation Services curriculum at ATU had a total of 81 students enrolled in spring 2010; of these there were 69 full-time students, 12 part-time students, and 15 minority students. The percentage of students graduating from the program with a baccalaureate degree is 1.85%. Minority baccalaureate degree status is 27.78%.

Plan for Recruitment Preparation {Attachment 4.10(b)}

Describe the development (updated on an annual basis) and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

DSB has cooperative agreements with each of the 33 colleges/universities in Arkansas in order to promote the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education to recruit and prepare individuals for careers in rehabilitation.

To address current needs for qualified personnel, DSB posts job openings with the Rehabilitation Recruitment Center at Utah State University to advertise vacancies nationwide. Locally, the Arkansas Department of Human Services personnel vacancies are published in the DHS Career Opportunities Bulletin, the statewide newspaper, the DSB website, Workforce Services offices, other state agencies, and college and university recruitment bulletins. Recruitment efforts are ongoing to colleges and universities, including those with a predominately minority enrollment. Universities in Arkansas with Rehabilitation Counseling Programs include:

Institution: University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR)
Location: Little Rock
Programs: Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling Education (RCE) with Emphasis in Rehabilitation Counseling

Institution: University of Arkansas at Fayetteville (UofA)
Location: Fayetteville
Programs: Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling and doctoral degrees in Rehabilitation and in Counseling Education

Institution: Arkansas State University (ASU)
Location: Jonesboro
Programs: Masters Rehabilitation Counseling

Institution: University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB)
Location: Pine Bluff
Programs: Bachelor degree in Rehabilitation Science

Institution: Arkansas Tech University (ATU)
Location: Russellville
Programs: Bachelor degree program in Rehabilitation Science

Personnel Standards

{Attachment 4.10(c)}

Describe the state agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

1. standards that are consistent with any national or state-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or, in the absence of these requirements, other comparable requirements (including state personnel requirements) that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services; and
2. to the extent that existing standards are not based on the highest requirements in the state applicable to a particular

profession or discipline, the steps the state is currently taking and the steps the State Plans to take in accordance with the written plan to retrain or hire personnel within the designated state unit to meet standards that are based on the highest requirements in the state, including measures to notify designated state unit personnel, institutions of higher education, and other public agencies of these steps and the timelines for taking each step.

Be sure to include the following:

- specific strategies for retraining, recruiting, and hiring personnel;
- the specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the standards;
- procedures for evaluating the designated state unit's progress in hiring or retraining personnel to meet applicable personnel standards within the established time period;
- the identification of initial minimum qualifications that the designated state unit will require of newly hired personnel when the state unit is unable to hire new personnel who meet the established personnel standards;
- the identification of a plan for training newly hired personnel who do not meet the established standards to meet the applicable standards within the time period established for all state unit personnel to meet the established personnel standards.

The Arkansas Office of Personnel Management (OPM) continues to recommend the minimum qualifications, job descriptions and salary rates for specific classifications, based upon labor market surveys, which are then reviewed and approved by the legislature.

Internships are available to students in the Rehabilitation programs across the state. In 2010, DSB has two practicum students, both African-American females from Arkansas State University, working in the Jonesboro office, which serves counties in the upper part

of the Delta. These counties are primarily agricultural and have a high minority population and a high poverty rate. DSB did not have any students apply as interns. In 2009, DSB had one practicum student and one intern in rehabilitation counseling. Both students were African-American females and attended the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR). The practicum student worked in the underserved Delta area surrounding Pine Bluff. The intern worked in the metropolitan area of Little Rock. Both students completed their programs. In 2009, a DSB employee who is deafblind completed her practicum and internship in rehabilitation teaching at DSB and Lions World Services for the Blind. She was a non-minority student at UALR and graduated in August, 2009.

DSB recruits, and, to the degree possible, hires counselors with a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or other closely related degree. DSB implements individual education plans for existing personnel to be retrained to meet certification standards for Council on Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) and Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC).

DSB established September 30, 2011 as the deadline for Vocational Rehabilitation Masters Degree Counselors currently employed to meet Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) requirements. Newly hired counselors will have seven years to meet CSPD requirements from date of hire.

The current CSPD status for VR Counselors is:

- One withdrawn from school for health reasons
- Four enrolled in school
- Three CRC
- One completed graduate school and is studying for CRC exam
- Two applied to start in fall
- One is LSW

CRC Senior Counselors are mentoring new counselors to comply with RSA's prior approval standards regarding eligibility determination, approval of IPE's, and closure determinations.

Staff Development **{Attachment 4.10(d)}**

Describe the state agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

1. a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated state unit, particularly

- with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology; and
2. procedures for the acquisition and dissemination to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessionals significant knowledge from research and other sources.

DSB staff must possess specific knowledge concerning the problems of blindness and be allowed the opportunity for career development as related to the delivery of Vocational Rehabilitation services.

DSB actively assesses the training needs of its employees and solicits their input regarding training needs. DSB surveys staff annually to determine the training or resources they require to perform their duties more efficiently and effectively. DSB also uses a state-approved personnel performance evaluation document to review an employee's performance and to identify individual training needs. Training grant funds are used to cover training costs, along with other federal and state revenues. In doing so, DSB maintains compliance with CSPD and its own administrative rules related to the certification of professional staff members.

Leadership development and capacity-building opportunities are offered through a wide variety of methods:

- The Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Center periodically surveys rehabilitation staff regarding training needs and develops courses and conferences based on the results or on requests by DSB and other agencies. In FY 2010, TACE provided DSB with face-to-face trainings and teleconferences on topics including: transition, diabetes, community rehabilitation programs, accountability, and leadership.
- In-house training is provided through DSB's Vocational Instructor, the DHS Organizational Development and Training Unit, DSB's annual Statewide meeting, the annual Field Services meeting, and one-on-one training which is made available to all staff depending upon the need. Information is also distributed at the monthly Director's meeting, the monthly Supervisors' meeting, various staff meetings, emails, the agency website, and DHS SharePoint.
- Staff are encouraged to participate in professional organizations, such as the National Rehabilitation Association, Lions Clubs, the National Federation of the Blind, the American Council of the Blind, and the Arkansas Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER), and opportunities are available to attend organizations' state and national conferences.

Retention of qualified personnel is addressed through CEU credit for staff training, as well as opportunities for expanding skills and knowledge in a variety of areas.

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs {Attachment 4.10(e)}

Describe how the designated state unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals.

Appropriate modes of communication, including sign language interpreters, are available on a contractual basis. The directive to utilize the contracts has been provided to all staff and is on file in each DSB office; it is also in DSB policy and on the DSB website.

DSB serves on the Arkansas Advisory Committee for the Arkansas Project for Children with Deafblindness and is an affiliate of the Helen Keller National Center. The Deaf/Blind Consortium has developed information in Spanish and provided training for parents and professionals to foster stronger partnerships among agencies who work with this population.

DSB provides interpreter services for communication with persons with limited English speaking ability on a contractual basis. DSB brochures are available in Spanish, and a supply is available in each office. The Arkansas Information Reading Services (AIRS) brochure is now available in Spanish. These translation resources will be utilized as needed for other materials and training for consumers in this underserved population.

Reader service, guide service, and any special adaptive equipment are made available to applicants for services, DSB consumers, and DSB personnel. Information is also available in the medium of choice for persons making application for DSB services and for persons with disabilities who are employed by DSB.

Coordination of Personnel Development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act {Attachment 4.10(f)}

Describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.

DSB is a charter member of the Arkansas Interagency Transition Partnership (AITP), which has approximately 22 member agencies and is coordinated by Arkansas Transition Services in affiliation with the Arkansas Department of Education, Special Education

Unit. The AITP discusses transition issues, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and other legislation, at its quarterly meetings and its annual Transition Conference. Quarterly meetings also facilitate the coordination of services among the member agencies.

DSB participates in the Transition Learning Collaborative (TLC), a group established by the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Center to share information and resources to improve transition at the state level. TACE Center staff researches student data collection and analyzes models used in other states and shares them with the states in the TLC collaborative. The TLC is composed of transition coordinators from both general and blind VR agencies in Region VI. Interaction with other states and TACE increases the resources available to DSB in regard to best practices and information about Section 101, IDEA, ADA and the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

In November 2010, DSB plans to meet with TACE and representatives from four other states to discuss the evaluations from the last online training module developed for VR Counselors and mid-level management, titled “All Aboard the Transition Train”. This information will be used to improve the next training offered. In addition to its annual meeting, DSB participates in the monthly TLC teleconferences.

A DSB policy directive instructs Counselors to contact transition professionals twice a year to identify any transition needs.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment **{Attachment 4.11(a)}**

Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:

- individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
- individuals with disabilities who are minorities;
- individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program; and
- individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system.

DSB conducts a comprehensive, statewide needs assessment at least every 3 years and the results are used in developing goals. In recent years there has been a marked increase in participation:

- 72 respondents in 2007
- 190 in 2009
- 356 in 2010

The DSB Board approved the current needs assessment instrument, which was developed with RSA guidance and input from consumer groups, the CAP agency, and other stakeholders. The instrument was widely distributed to consumers, support groups, staff, medical providers, and other stakeholders through mail-outs, e-mails, the news media, the DSB web site and the Arkansas Information Reading Service (AIRS). The results are given below:

Summary of 2010 DSB Needs Assessment

A total of 356 needs assessments were completed and returned to the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB). Consumers, support groups, staff, medical providers, the general public, and other stakeholders were asked to provide demographic information and responses to the following questions:

- What are the greatest needs in Vocational Rehabilitation services which can be provided by DSB (list your top three in order of importance. Examples: training, assistive technology, cane travel, instruction in techniques of daily living, low vision services, transportation, job search and placement, etc.)?
- Are all geographical areas in the state being adequately served, including rural areas?
- Are the current outreach and delivery of services provided by the Division of Services for the Blind adequately meeting the needs of minorities and persons from culturally diverse communities?
- Are Stakeholders, families, community based organizations, local Workforce centers, community rehabilitation programs and consumer groups being utilized effectively in identifying and meeting the needs of individuals who are blind or visually impaired?

The respondents consisted of:

- 197 DSB consumers
- 35 DSB staff
- 65 stakeholders
- 59 general public

Of the 221 respondents disclosing a disability, there were:

- 71 blind
- 138 low vision

- 23 other

Of the 356 respondents, 58 were minorities and 80 chose not to disclose their status.

Below is a breakdown of the ages of respondents providing their age:

Total	14 – 21	22 – 30	31 – 40	41 – 50	51 – 60	61 – 70	70 +
356	40	23	19	53	83	54	51

Below is a breakdown of the needs of respondents:

Employment Assistance*	Low Vision Assessment**	O&M-IL Services***	Vocational Training****	Assistive Technology	Transportation
207	149	147	138	116	101

* Employment Assistance included job search and job placement.

** Low Vision Assessment included medical assistance.

*** O&M-IL Services included cane travel, home care, instruction in daily living.

**** Vocational Training included school, college and other training.

All geographic areas being adequately served:

- 56% yes
- 15% no
- 29% unknown

Current outreach and delivery of services adequately meeting the needs of minorities:

- 57 % yes
- 8% no
- 35% unknown

Stakeholders and families used effectively in identifying and meeting needs:

- 59% yes
- 9% no
- 32% unknown

Annual Estimate of Individuals to be Served and Costs of Services {Attachment 4.11(b)}

- Identify the number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services.

- Identify the number of eligible individuals who will receive services provided with funds under:
 - Part B of Title I;
 - Part B of Title VI;
 - each priority category, if under an order of selection.
- Identify the cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

Basis for Estimates

DSB uses census data, population growth, and the incidence of blindness as the basis for its 3.8% estimated growth rate for individuals to be served through Part B of Title I. Historical data is used to estimate the number of Supported Employment cases to be served through Part B of Title VI, which has remained relatively stable through the years. However, due to planned emphasis in the area of Supported Employment, DSB projects a 10% increase in SE cases. DSB estimates the average cost per VR and SE consumer will increase by 7%.

Estimates for Part B of Title I for FY 2011:

DSB estimates an increase of 40 consumers above the current number served of 1405, making a projected total of 1445 at a total cost of \$5,166,386 (\$3,575 per consumer).

DSB estimates an increase of 30 consumers who are members of a minority population, making a projected total of 485 compared to 455 in the previous published year. (Note: the minority figures are included in the total VR figures given in the first paragraph.) In addition to a growing Hispanic population, Arkansas has one of the highest Marshallese populations in the United States. It is estimated that there are 10,000 Marshallese located primarily in the northwest corner of the state. The Compact of Free Association, which allows the Marshallese to live and travel freely and at-will between the Marshall Islands and the United States, will end in 2023.

Estimates for Part B of Title VI for FY 2011:

DSB estimates an increase of two consumers in Supported Employment above the current 19, making a projected total of 21 at a total cost of \$57,919 (\$2,758 per consumer).

Estimates of Eligible Consumers for FY 2011:

Based on statistical reporting derived from Prevent Blindness America, an overall rate of 2.7% for the prevalence of blindness was applied to the projected 2011 growth figures for Arkansas population aged 15 to 64, and DSB estimates that there are approximately

61,632 persons in Arkansas who might be eligible for and could receive Vocational Rehabilitation services.

Goals and Priorities

{Attachment 4.11(c) (1)}

The goals and priorities are based on the comprehensive statewide assessment, on requirements related to the performance standards and indicators, and on other information about the state agency. (See section 101(a)(15)(C) of the Act.) This attachment should be updated when there are material changes in the information that require the description to be amended.

- Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a council.
- Identify if the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has such a council, jointly reviewed the goals and priorities and jointly agreed to any revisions.
- Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.
- Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:
 - the most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;
 - the performance of the state on standards and indicators; and
- other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

DSB developed the following goals based on RSA guidance for the State Plan FY 2011, recommendations by the DSB Board, and the 2010 comprehensive, statewide needs assessment, which is done at least every 3 years. Below are the goals, as approved by the DSB Board:

Goal #1: DSB will increase the employment opportunities for people who are blind or severely visually impaired.

Strategy: DSB will evaluate the effectiveness of the job developers and job coaches hired with stimulus money and, if productive in terms of consumer employment, will absorb the positions into the formula VR funding, adjusting purchased services to absorb these costs.

Performance Measure: A job development unit will be established.

Strategy: Based upon consumer response and effectiveness, DSB will continue to hold Job Clubs to assist participants in acquiring job seeking skills and improving their probability of securing employment.

Performance Measure: Weekly Job Clubs will be held at the DSB Tech Lab.

Strategy: DSB will continue to expand employment services to minorities in the underserved Delta area through the new West Memphis office.

Performance Measure: DSB will see a rising number of cases from this new area.

Strategy: DSB will continue to refer individuals for benefits counseling.

Performance Measure: Area Supervisors will monitor caseloads to ensure that VR Counselors will refer at least 10 consumers per caseload for benefits counseling.

Strategy: DSB will continue to refer eligible Older Blind individuals to VR.

Performance Measure: DSB will refer 100% of eligible Older Blind individuals to VR.

Strategy: DSB will continue to recognize successful consumers and their employers and will encourage peer mentoring.

Performance Measures:

- Each counselor who has been in his/her position for at least a year will nominate one individual from his/her caseload as a candidate for Consumer of the Year and encourage the individual to serve as a peer mentor to other people who are blind or severely visually impaired.
- DSB will award Consumer of the Year candidates and their employers with certificates/plaques and related publicity.

Strategy: DSB will continue to expand its assistive technology services and improve access to these services and equipment.

Performance Measures:

- DSB will continue to offer assistive technology training to new Rehabilitation Teachers as vacant positions are filled, so that staff can provide basic technology support to consumers in their respective geographic areas statewide.
- DSB will continue to provide training to new Workforce Services staff as vacancies occur in order to increase their knowledge of accessible technology and the needs of consumers.
- DSB staff will continue to meet consumers at DSB-sponsored accessible kiosks at 10 Workforce Services centers in order to assist them in their job searches.

Overall Performance Measures for Goal 1: Meet or exceed federal performance indicator 1.1 for services for individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired. Performance Indicator 1.1: Change in the number of employment outcomes is the difference between the number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the current performance period compared to the number of individuals who exit

the VR program after achieving an employment outcome during the previous performance period. The difference must equal or exceed the previous year's performance.

Goal #2: DSB will increase its services to transition students.

Strategy: DSB will update the collaborative database of transition students as needed.

Performance Measure: The Transition Coordinator will review the database to insure it is being maintained by Rehabilitation Assistants, who input local information.

Strategy: VR Counselors will continue to track transition students on their caseloads to insure that the IPE is developed or updated before a student graduates from high school.

Performance Measure: Area Supervisors will monitor this during case reviews to insure that no transition student will graduate without a current IPE.

Strategy: DSB will continue to provide assessments to transition students specifically focused on activities of daily living, including but not limited to, mobility, knowledge of available transportation resources, self-advocacy, acquisition of a variety of reading options, awareness of job opportunities, and rights and responsibilities as an informed consumer.

Performance Measure: All transition students will be referred to Rehabilitation Teachers for assessment of daily living skills and needed instruction.

Strategy: DSB will hold an Information Summit to assist parents in becoming more knowledgeable and better prepared to advocate for their children at Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings.

Performance Measure: In FY 2011, DSB will invite ESVI and transition parents to an Information Summit with VR Counselors and Rehabilitation Teachers, to provide information about students' rights and accommodations.

Strategy: DSB will continue to strengthen relationships with ESVI.

Performance Measure: In addition to the current mail-outs, in FY 2011 an e-mail component will be added as a supplemental method of outreach. In addition to the local networking efforts, the Transition Coordinator will dialogue with ESVI at a state level to discover any transition students that need services and should be referred to DSB.

Goal #3: DSB will expand its outreach efforts to include the general public, as well as the unserved, underserved, minorities, and stakeholders.

Strategy: DSB will use exhibit booths at highly populated events to educate the public about DSB services and their availability.

Performance Measure: A pilot project will be initiated to participate in two mid-sized festivals, alternating locations around the state, in spring and fall.

Strategy: DSB will increase its contacts with faith-based organizations.

Performance Measure: DSB will make at least one faith-based outreach effort in each of its geographic areas in FY 2011.

Strategy: DSB will increase its services to minorities.

Performance Measures: DSB will make at least one minority outreach effort to Hispanic, Asian, or other ethnic groups in each of its geographic areas in FY 2011.

Strategy: Area Supervisors and administrative staff will continue to attend the state conferences of blindness consumer groups, and opportunities will be offered to direct service staff as well.

Performance Measure: DSB will continue to send at least five supervisors/administrators to these conferences and will make presentations as requested.

Overall Performance Measures for Goal 3: Meet or exceed federal performance indicator 2.1, Equal Access to Services. Performance Indicator 2.1: The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all individuals with disabilities from non-minority backgrounds must equal or exceed .80.

Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds {Attachment 4.11(c) (4)}

Specify the state's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act for the provision of supported employment services.

During FY 2009, the amount of Title VI, Part B funds distributed was \$54,130. The amount of Title VI, Part B funds projected for FY 2010 is \$36,262; DSB projects that this will be distributed by close of the FY September 30, 2010. DSB will allocate funding from Title VI, Part B to provide Supported Employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities. These funds are a supplement to the funds provided under Title I of the Act. Title VI, Part B funds will only be used in the provision of Supported Employment services to those individuals determined eligible through assessments determining that it is an appropriate objective. Supported Employment services will be customer-driven through the setting of goals in the consumer's Individual Plan for Employment (IPE). In FY 2009, DSB provided supported employment services to 19 individuals. Of this number, 7 cases were closed, of which 0 were closed competitively employed not in supported employment, 0 were closed competitively employed in supported employment, 1 was closed not competitively employed-not in supported employment, and 6 were closed without an employment outcome. FY 2011 Projections: 21 consumers will be served.

Issues affecting Supported Employment in Arkansas include: the limited number of service providers statewide; the rural nature of the state; the lack of consistent available funding for extended services; and the lack of knowledge, experience, and training SE providers have in the provision of supported employment services and placement for individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired. Many providers do not have and are unwilling to expend time, monies and resources to train staff in this specialty area of expertise.

DSB provides assistive technology services and devices based upon assessments and recommendations by the DSB Technology Unit, availability of funds, and the consumer's IPE.

DSB has set the following goals for the utilization and distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds, based on the most recent comprehensive needs assessment and the recommendations of the DSB Board:

Goal #1: Increase the number of Supported Employment Providers to better serve DSB consumers.

Strategy: DSB will continue to collaborate with other agencies to expand the number of SE providers.

Performance Measures: At least two new potential SE providers will be identified and contacted.

Strategy: A new faith-based Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will be issued to recruit SE providers, along with VR providers.

Performance Measure: At least two providers will be recruited through the RFQ.

Strategy: DSB will investigate the possibility of having CRPs become Employment Networks (ENs).

Performance Measure: A meeting will have taken place with at least one CRP to discuss the possibility of its becoming an EN.

Goal #2: Address the lack of knowledge and training that SE Providers have in the provision of SE Services and placement for individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired.

Strategy: DSB will collaborate with the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Center and other agencies to train SE Providers.

Performance Measures: At least one training on SE will be conducted in FY 2011.

Strategy: DSB will collaborate with Arkansas School for the Blind to produce a video to increase SE providers' awareness of the capability of DSB consumers and introduce SE Providers to blindness issues and how consumers can be placed on jobs often with only slight modifications/adaptations.

Performance Measures: The video will be shown at least once in each DSB service area during FY 2011.

**Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and
Expansion Activities
{Attachment 4.11(d)}**

This attachment should include required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any

barriers to accessing the vocational rehabilitation and the supported employment programs.

- Describe the methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.
- Identify how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process.
- Describe how assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis.
- Identify what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities.
- Identify what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.
- Identify plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs, if applicable.
- Describe strategies to improve the performance with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators.
- Describe strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.
- Describe how the agency's strategies will be used to:
 - achieve the goals and priorities identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1);
 - support innovation and expansion activities; and
 - overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the state Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the state Supported Employment Services Program.

Strategies

DSB has developed the following strategies to expand and improve services to its consumers. These strategies were developed in regard to its goals for the State Plan FY 2011, which are to: increase the employment opportunities for people who are blind or severely visually impaired; increase services to transition students; and expand outreach efforts to include the general public, as well as the unserved, underserved and minorities. The performance measures are included with the goals in 4.11(c) (1). Here are the strategies:

- *Strategy:* DSB will evaluate the effectiveness of the job developers and job coaches hired with stimulus money and, if productive in terms of consumer employment, will absorb the positions into the formula VR funding, adjusting purchased services to absorb these costs.
- *Strategy:* Based upon consumer response and effectiveness, DSB will continue to hold Job Clubs to assist participants in acquiring job seeking skills and improving their probability of securing employment.
- *Strategy:* DSB will continue to expand employment services to minorities in the underserved Delta area through the new West Memphis office.
- *Strategy:* DSB will continue to refer individuals for benefits counseling.
- *Strategy:* DSB will continue to refer eligible Older Blind individuals to VR.
- *Strategy:* DSB will continue to recognize successful consumers and their employers and will encourage peer mentoring.
- *Strategy:* DSB will continue to expand its assistive technology services and improve access to these services and equipment.
- *Strategy:* DSB will update the collaborative database of transition students as needed.
- *Strategy:* VR Counselors will continue to track transition students on their caseloads to insure that the IPE is developed or updated before a student graduates from high school.
- *Strategy:* DSB will continue to provide assessments to transition students specifically focused on activities of daily living, including but not limited to, mobility, knowledge of available transportation resources, self-advocacy, acquisition of a variety of reading options, awareness of job opportunities, and rights and responsibilities as an informed consumer.
- *Strategy:* DSB will continue to expand and update a collaborative database of transition students.
- *Strategy:* VR Counselors will continue to track transition students on their caseloads to insure that the IPE is developed or updated before a student graduates from high school.
- *Strategy:* DSB will continue to provide assessments to transition students specifically focused on activities of daily living, including but not limited to, mobility, knowledge of available transportation resources, self-advocacy, acquisition of a variety of reading options, awareness of job opportunities, and rights and responsibilities as an informed consumer.
- *Strategy:* DSB will hold an Information Summit to assist parents in becoming more knowledgeable and better prepared to advocate for their children at Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings.

- *Strategy:* DSB will continue to strengthen relationships with ESVI.
- *Strategy:* DSB will use exhibit booths at highly populated events to educate the public about DSB services and their availability.
- *Strategy:* DSB will increase its contacts with faith-based organizations.
- *Strategy:* DSB will increase its services to minorities.
- *Strategy:* Area Supervisors and administrative staff will continue to attend the state conferences of blindness consumer groups, and opportunities will be offered to direct service staff as well.

A broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired at each stage of the rehabilitation process in accordance with the individual's employment goal and IPE. The provision of assistive technology services and devices is based upon assessments and recommendations by the DSB Technology Unit, availability of funds, and the consumer's IPE. DSB will continue to offer assistive technology training to new Rehabilitation Teachers in FY 2011 as vacant positions are filled, so that staff can continue to provide basic technology support to consumers in their local areas.

The following strategies address outreach activities to identify and serve individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired, including those with the most significant disabilities, and who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program:

- *Strategy:* DSB will continue to expand employment services to minorities in the underserved Delta area through the new West Memphis office.
- *Strategy:* DSB will increase its contacts with faith-based organizations. This will include contacts with churches that do outreach to specific minority populations or are churches comprised of minorities.
- *Strategy:* DSB will increase its services to minorities. Area Supervisors and counselors have been asked to reach out to ethnic organizations in their communities and offer to speak to their groups or meet with their presidents/chairpersons regarding referrals and services.

DSB has developed the following strategies to expand and improve Supported Employment services to its consumers. These strategies were developed in regard to its SE goals for FY 2011, which are: to increase the number of Supported Employment Providers to better serve DSB consumers and to address the lack of knowledge and training that SE Providers have in the provision of SE Services and placement for individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired. The performance measures are included with the goals in 4.11(c) (4). Here are the strategies for those goals:

- *Strategy:* DSB will continue to collaborate with other agencies to expand the number of SE providers.
- *Strategy:* A new faith-based Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will be issued to recruit SE providers, along with VR providers.
- *Strategy:* DSB will investigate the possibility of having CRPs become Employment Networks (ENs).

- *Strategy:* DSB will collaborate with the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Center and other agencies to train SE Providers.
- *Strategy:* DSB will collaborate with Arkansas School for the Blind to produce a video to increase SE providers' awareness of the capability of DSB consumers and introduce SE Providers to blindness issues and how consumers can be placed on jobs often with only slight modifications/adaptations.

Strategies for Improving Indicator 1.6

DSB missed Indicator 1.6 this report period and plans the following strategies:

- DSB has identified a problem in that the status of consumers who report their own income as the largest single source of support at the time of application was not being updated when consumers exited the program due to employment. Area Supervisors will instruct and remind Counselors to update this information and will monitor case records to ensure necessary action is taken.
- DSB will continue to serve homemakers with ILRS funds in an effort to reduce the number of homemaker closures and improve performance in this indicator.

Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

DSB is converting its Blind Services Information System (BSIS) to a web-based application. This system will allow VR Counselors and Rehabilitation Teachers to complete case service reports while delivering consumer services. DSB will purchase notebook computers to enable DSB staff to document consumer needs and services and acquire related signatures on-site during visits in the consumer's home or on the job. This technology will minimize the number of return appointments. DSB staff routinely travel to consumer homes and worksites, rather than requiring consumers to visit DSB Offices, because of the difficulty consumers face in making dependable transportation arrangements in a rural state.

DSB is making NFB-NEWSLINE® available through DSB's Arkansas Information Reading Services (AIRS) to consumers who are blind and severely visually impaired. This will allow consumers to listen to the newspaper over a standard touch-tone telephone, through the Internet, or by download to a digital talking-book player or mp3-playing device. Through the service, Arkansas consumers can independently access over 300 newspapers and magazines and decide how, when, and where they wish to read their favorite publications.

Evaluation and Reports of Progress **{Attachment 4.11(e) (2)}**

1. Identify all VR program goals consistent with the goals described in the most recently submitted version of Attachment 4.11(c)(1),

including an evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals were achieved.

- Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
 - Provide a description of the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.
2. Identify all supported employment program goals consistent with the goals described in Attachment 4.11(c)(4), including an evaluation of the extent to which the supported employment program goals were achieved.
- Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
 - Provide a description of the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.
3. Provide an assessment of the performance of the VR program on the standards and indicators for the most recently completed federal fiscal year.
4. Provide a report on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized in the most recent completed federal fiscal year.

Below are the evaluation and reports of progress for FY 2009 Goals and Priorities, covering September 30, 2008 – October 1, 2009:

Evaluation of FY 2009 VR Goals:

Goal #1: DSB will increase the number of employment outcomes above that of the previous year:

Strategy: DSB will expand and improve services to individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired in the underserved Delta area. Services will be based upon the individual's assessment and IPE and may include services such as mobility, physical restoration, independent living skills, equipment needs, and employment counseling.

Performance Measure: DSB will open a new office and add another VR counselor to serve individuals in the Delta.

Goal Met: A new office was opened and staffed in West Memphis.

Strategy: DSB will improve supervisory support to local personnel.

Performance Measure: DSB will decrease the ratio of caseload staff to field supervisors to 10 to one in order to improve supervisory support to local personnel. The current ratio is 17 to one.

Goal Met: The number of field supervisors was increased to five.

Strategy: DSB will increase the number of referrals from faith-based organizations.

Performance Measure: DSB will increase the number of formal outreach activities to faith-based organizations by 10 in order to obtain more referrals from these organizations. This is compared to two previous activities.

Goal Met: Counselors increased their contacts with faith-based organizations, and DSB contracted with two CILs that responded to a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) entitled "Faith-based Bridge for Blind Consumer Employment". Through the contract, these CILs worked with church organizations to increase VR referrals to DSB.

Strategy: DSB will refer more individuals for benefits counseling.

Performance Measure: DSB will refer 5% more individuals to AWIN for benefits counseling.

Goal Met: Counselors are referring the majority of their VR consumers to AWIN for benefits counseling, and Area Field Supervisors are monitoring the referrals.

Strategy: DSB will continue to refer eligible Older Blind individuals to VR.

Performance Measure: DSB will refer 100% of eligible Older Blind individuals to VR.

Goal Met: Area field supervisors monitor caseloads to ensure that 100% of eligible Older Blind individuals are being referred to the VR program.

Strategy: DSB will recognize successful consumers and encourage peer mentoring.

Performance Measures:

- DSB will nominate a total of 12 individuals as Consumer of the Year candidates and encourage them to serve as peer mentors to other people who are blind or severely visually impaired.
- Consumer of the Year candidates will be chosen in each of the nine geographic areas.
- DSB will broadcast radio programs featuring Consumer of the Year nominees, their employers, and DSB staff at the local level who are involved in their rehabilitation plan.

Goal Met: VR Counselors nominated consumers as candidates, and the DSB Board selected an overall winner. Radio programs on Arkansas Information Reading Services (AIRS) and news releases sent to the media publicized the accomplishments of the consumers, applauded the employers, and educated the public about DSB services.

Strategy: DSB will expand its assistive technology services and improve access to these services and equipment.

Performance Measure: DSB will increase its assistive technology staff at the local level by training nine Rehabilitation Teachers to provide basic technology support to consumers in their respective geographic areas statewide.

Goal Met: The DSB Technology Unit trained nine Rehabilitation Teachers to provide basic tech support to consumers.

Strategy: DSB will provide training in vocational support with regard to persons who are blind or severely visually impaired to staff of local Workforce Centers, with specific emphasis on placement activities.

Performance Measure: DSB will provide this training in 10 local Workforce centers.

Goal Met: DSB staff provided training to Workforce Services staff and used stimulus money to purchase accessible kiosks with computers and speech software to assist consumers in their job searches.

Overall Performance Measures for Goal 1: Meet or exceed federal performance indicator 1.1 for services for individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired. Performance Indicator 1.1: Change in the number of employment outcomes is the difference between the number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the current performance period compared to the number of individuals who exit the VR program after achieving an employment outcome during the previous performance period. The difference must equal or exceed the previous year's performance.

Goal Met: DSB exceeded this federal performance indicator.

Goal #2: DSB will increase the number of transition students served by the DSU above that of the previous year.

Strategy: DSB will collaborate with Educational Services for the Visually Impaired (ESVI) and local school districts to develop training, based on DSB's signed agreement with the Department of Education Special Education Unit, on accommodations to be provided to transition age youth.

Performance Measure: A training on school accommodations and agency roles will be conducted during 2009.

Goal Met: ESVI had an information booth at the annual statewide meeting October 22-23, 2008. An ESVI representative distributed brochures and answered questions from DSB staff. As an exhibitor, the representative was also introduced at the meeting and given an opportunity to speak about ESVI and its services.

Strategy: DSB will expand local services to transition students in eastern Arkansas to increase the number of referrals of transition students to DSB.

Performance Measure: DSB will open a new office in the Delta.

Goal Met: DSB opened a new office in West Memphis.

Strategy: DSB will network with stakeholders to build a collaborative database of transition students.

Performance Measure: DSB will have at least two meetings with stakeholders to collaborate on a transition database.

Goal Met: The Area Field Supervisor who serves as the DSB Transition Coordinator met at least twice with education officials, starting with those at Arkansas School for the Blind, to build a transition database.

Strategy: The DSB Transition Coordinator will track transition students to insure that the IPE is developed or updated before a student graduates from high school.

Performance Measure: No transition student will graduate without a current IPE.

Goal Met: To ensure that no student graduates without a current IPE, the DSB Transition Coordinator uses the transition database, and Area Field Supervisors monitor the caseloads of VR Counselors.

Strategy: DSB will redefine the transition age group as ages 14 through 26 similar to other state transition programs.

Performance Measure: The change in age group will increase the number of transition students above that of the previous year.

Goal Met: Redefining the transition age group increased the number of transition students by 97 over the previous year. If the age group not been redefined, the number of transition students served still would have increased by 23.

Strategy: DSB will co-sponsor the statewide Arkansas Workforce Conference set for October 29-31, 2008, in Little Rock.

Performance Measure: The conference will include at least one workshop specifically targeted toward serving youth, including those with disabilities.

Goal Met: DSB was a co-sponsor of the conference “Charting the Course: Navigating Education, Employment, and Economic Development.” One of the conference workshops was “Challenging our Youth.”

Strategy: DSB will provide assessments to transition students specifically focused on activities of daily living, including but not limited to, mobility, knowledge of available transportation resources, self-advocacy, acquisition of a variety of reading options, awareness of job opportunities, and rights and responsibilities as an informed consumer.

Performance Measure: All transition students will receive assessments of daily living skills.

Goal Met: Area Field Supervisors monitored caseloads to ensure that assessments were being performed.

Goal #3: DSB will increase the participation of stakeholders and frequency of their involvement in DSB programs, services and activities above that of the previous year:

Strategy: DSB will increase the number of outreach activities to faith-based organizations.

Performance Measure: The number of outreach activities to faith-based organizations will increase from the current two to 10 outreach activities.

Goal Met: Counselors increased their contacts with faith-based organizations, and DSB contracted with two CILs that responded to a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) entitled “Faith-based Bridge for Blind Consumer Employment”. Through the contract, these CILs worked with church organizations to increase VR referrals to DSB.

Strategy: DSB will increase outreach efforts to organizations that serve the growing Hispanic population and will increase its use of Hispanic media to disseminate information about services and programs.

Performance Measures:

- The number of outreach activities to organizations that serve the Hispanic community will increase from the current three to 10 outreach activities.
- The number of news releases to Hispanic media will exceed that of 2008 by 10% in 2009.

Goal Met: VR Counselors increased their efforts to reach out to Hispanic organizations and individuals. In addition to news releases and advertisements in Hispanic newspapers, a local Hispanic radio station, Portencia, aired public service announcements regarding the public forum for the State Plan.

Strategy: DSB will involve stakeholders in the development and implementation of staff training and consumer awareness activities and in turn will provide in-service training to stakeholders as requested.

Performance Measure: The participation level with stakeholders in DSB conferences and trainings will meet or exceed that of 2008, and DSB will provide at least one training or presentation to a stakeholder.

Goal Met: DSB staff provided training and guidance to consumer support groups at their regular meetings. DSB trained Department of Workforce Services (DWS) staff in 10 locations on accessible kiosks and assisting individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired. The DSB Board is comprised of stakeholder representatives, and the Board members received training using the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) modules.

Strategy: DSB will co-sponsor the Arkansas Workforce Conference set for October 29-31, 2008, in Little Rock. An estimated 300 Workforce professionals and other stakeholders from across the state are expected to attend, and national facilitators will present strategies for collaboration and best practices from across the nation that have been shown to work at local levels.

Performance Measure: DSB will initiate at least two collaborative efforts as a result of the conference.

Goal Met: The conference “Charting the Course: Navigating Education, Employment, and Economic Development” offered numerous networking opportunities, facilitated collaboration, and strengthened exiting relationships.

Strategy: DSB will broadcast on Arkansas Information Reading Service (AIRS) regarding issues affecting individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired, empowering them with a more informed choice in civic activities.

Performance Measure: The Arkansas General Assembly will become a stakeholder in order to report to these constituents on legislative matters.

Goal Met: As the state moved through the legislative session, DSB used AIRS to broadcast information of interest to individuals who are blind and severely visually impaired.

Evaluation of FY 2009 SE Goals:

Goal #1: DSB will identify and serve all eligible transition-aged students needing Supportive Employment services.

Strategy: DSB will expand local services to transition students needing SE services in eastern Arkansas.

Performance Measure: DSB will open a new office in the Delta.

Goal Met: DSB opened a new office in West Memphis to better serve transition students in the Delta.

Strategy: DSB will network with stakeholders to build a collaborative database of transition students, including their needs for SE services.

Performance Measure: DSB will have at least two meetings with stakeholders to collaborate on identifying and tracking SE needs through a transition database.

Goal Met: The DSB Transition Coordinator and Arkansas School for the Blind representatives met twice to develop a transition data base for its students. Later the Transition Coordinator contacted public school representatives and expanded the data

base to include other transition students. The Transition Coordinator will continue to maintain the data base.

Goal #2: DSB will increase the number of Supported Employment outcomes above that of the previous year:

Strategy: DSB will collaborate with other agencies to expand the number of SE providers.

Performance Measures: At least two new SE providers will be identified and contacted.

Goal Met: DSB started using Arkansas Support Network and Goodwill Industries as SE providers.

Strategy: DSB will expand SE services to adults who are blind or severely visually impaired in eastern Arkansas.

Performance Measure: DSB will open a new office in the Delta.

Goal Met: DSB opened a new office in West Memphis to better serve adults needing SE services in the Delta.

Strategy: DSB will train caseload staff on SE services, referrals, job placement/development, and benefits planning.

Performance Measures: At least two trainings on SE outcomes will be conducted in the coming year.

Goal Met: Four trainings on Supported Employment outcomes and related issues were conducted by different presenters at the Arkansas Rehabilitation Association Conference May, 2009.

Evaluation and Report of Progress on the Performance Evaluation Standards and Performance Indicators

Below is the evaluation and report of progress on the Performance Evaluation Standards and Performance Indicators established by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in the reporting of data to comply with the 34 CFR 361, Subpart E, 361.80 through 361.89 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998. Historically, DSB has succeeded at meeting or exceeding the goals, and therefore will continue with present methods of counseling and providing services; monitoring by supervisors; and case reviews. However, DSB has used trends in performance indicators, along with RSA reviews, to recognize the need to improve in its outreach to minorities, to reduce the number of homemaker closures, and to decrease the ratio of caseload staff to supervisors. In FY 2011, DSB will also explore the possibility of reducing the ratio of consumers to caseload staff.

DSB missed Indicator 1.6 this report period and plans the following strategies:

- DSB has identified a problem in that the status of consumers who report their own income as the largest single source of support at the time of application was not being updated when consumers exited the program due to employment. Area Supervisors will instruct and remind Counselors to update this information and will monitor case records to ensure necessary action is taken.
- DSB will continue to serve homemakers with ILRS funds in an effort to reduce the number of homemaker closures and improve performance in this indicator.

The information below describes DSB performance for Standard 1 and Standard 2:

Evaluation Standard 1 - Employment Outcomes:

A Designated State Unit (DSU) must assist any eligible individual, including an individual with a significant disability, to obtain, maintain, or regain high-quality employment.

In order to pass Standard 1 a state VR agency must meet or exceed the performance level for four of the six indicators including meeting or exceeding the performance level for two of the three primary indicators. Primary indicators are 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5.

- **Performance Indicator 1.1: Change in the number of employment outcomes**

The number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the current performance period compared to the number of individuals who exit the VR program after achieving an employment outcome during the previous performance period.

FY 2009	350
FY 2008	347
Result	3 Individuals or .86%

Required Performance Level: DSU's performance in current period must equal or exceed performance in previous period.

- **Performance Indicator 1.2: Percent Employed**

Of all individuals who exit the VR program after receiving services, the percentage who are determined to have achieved an employment outcome.

470	Individuals exited after receiving services
350	Individuals or
74.47%	exited with an employment outcome

Required Performance Level: For the general and combined DSU's, the level is 55.8%; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is 68.9%

- **Performance Indicator 1.3: Employed Competitively**

Of all Individuals determined to have achieved an employment outcome, the percentage who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage.

350	Individuals exited the VR Program with an employment
-----	--

	outcome
244	Individuals or
69.71%	exited the VR Program with an employment outcome earning at least minimum wage (\$6.55)

Required Performance Level: For the general and combined DSU's, the level is 72.6%; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is 35.4%.

- **Performance Indicator 1.4: Significant Disability**

Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the percentage who are individuals with significant disabilities.

244	Individuals exited the VR Program with an employment outcome earning at least minimum wage (\$6.55)
243	Individuals or
99.59%	with significant disabilities exited the VR Program with an employment outcome earning at least minimum wage (\$6.55)

Required Performance Level: For the general and combined DSU's, the level is 62.4%; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is 89.0%

- **Performance Indicator 1.5: Earning Ratio**

The average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage as a ratio to the State's average hourly earnings for all individuals in the State who are employed (as derived from the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports "State Average Annual Pay" for the most recent available year).

244	Individuals exited the VR Program with an employment outcome earning at least minimum wage (\$6.55)
\$10.59	Average hourly wage of individuals who exited the VR Program with an employment outcome earning at least minimum wage (\$6.55)
\$17.02	State's average hourly earnings
.62	Ratio

Required Performance Level: For the general and combined DSU's, the level is a ratio of .52; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the ratio is .59.

- **Performance Indicator 1.6: Self-support**

Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the difference between the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of economic support at the time they exit the VR program and the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of support at the time they apply for VR services.

219 or 89.75%	Individuals reported their own income as the largest single source of support at time of exit
165 or 67.62%	Individuals reported their own income as the largest single source of support at time of application
54 or 22.13%	Difference between the two percentages

Required Performance Level: For the general and combined DSU's, the level is an arithmetic difference of 53.0; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is a difference of 30.4.

Evaluation Standard 2: Equal Access to Services

2.1 Service Rate

The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority back-grounds as a ratio to the service rate for all individuals with disabilities from non-minority backgrounds.

180	Minorities exited the VR Program
136	Minorities exited the VR Program after receiving services
75.55%	Service rate of minority individuals
398	Non-minorities exited the VR Program
334	Non-minorities exited the VR Program after receiving services
83.92%	Service rate of non-minority individuals
.90	Ratio level of service rate

Required Performance Level: All agencies must attain a ratio level of .80.

Report on How Funds Reserved for Innovation and Expansion Activities Were Utilized in the Most Recently Completed Federal Fiscal Year

NFB NEWSLINE services began July 1, 2009. Planned services were provided free gratis during the first quarter of the contract.

Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services {Attachment 6.3}

- Describe quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Describe the timing of the transition to extended services

DSB, ARS, the DHS Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS), the DHS Division of Behavioral Health Services (BHS), and the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), Special Education Unit (SEU), Transition Unit partner through an interagency cooperative agreement outlining responsibilities and the provision of Supported Employment and other services to transition-aged consumers. The agreement produced an interagency steering committee which works on Supported Employment issues. The steering committee is facilitated by the EmployAbility Project, which is a grant program housed in the DHS Division of Aging and Adult Services.

DSB coordinates with approximately 20 agencies, non-profits and consumers, on the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) Advisory Committee and seeks ways to reduce barriers to Supported Employment and recruit more SE providers.

These groups have identified similar issues affecting Supported Employment in Arkansas. There are a limited number of service providers in the state, and there are a relatively low number of consumers who need SE services, particularly those who are blind or severely visually impaired. These consumers are spread throughout the rural parts of the state. Providers often consider these barriers as cost prohibitive. Added to this, providers want assurances of consistent available funding for continuing extended services, perhaps for the life of the consumer, and want payments for less tangible results than job placement, such as improving the consumers' social interaction. Another barrier that has been identified is the lack of knowledge, experience, and training SE providers have in the provision of supported employment services and placement for individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired. This is a specialty area of expertise that many providers do not have and are unwilling to expend time, monies and resources to train staff in this area.

DSB collaborates with ARS and other agencies to interest Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) in assisting with Supported Employment services such as job assessment, job adjustment, On-the-job Training (OJT), placement, and transition services. In FY 2011, DSB will investigate the potential success of getting CRPs to become Employment Networks (ENs).

DSB continues to provide supported employment services and uses the following providers: Easter Seals; Goodwill Industries; Arkansas Light House for the Blind; Blindness Learning in a New Dimension (Blind Inc.); Abilities Unlimited, Cross County

Special Workshop, Boost in Fort Smith, Blind Inc., Clovernook Center in Memphis, and Pathfinders.

Transitioning from DSB services to extended services will not occur until at least 90 days after the case is placed into status 22 (employment), but should occur no later than 18 months after the case is placed into status 22. The time frame for moving a case into extended services will be determined by the VR Counselor's monitoring of the consumer's adjustment to the work environment and will be outlined in the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE). Supervisors review this process monthly, and the outcome is subject to case audit semi-annually.

In FY 2009, DSB provided supported employment services to 19 individuals. Of this number, 7 cases were closed, of which 0 were closed competitively employed not in supported employment, 0 were closed competitively employed in supported employment, 1 was closed not competitively employed-not in supported employment, and 6 were closed without an employment outcome. FY 2011 Projections: 21 consumers will be served.